

# Route map through assessment

**Course: Geography**

**Level: National 4**

This document is intended to assist teachers in planning and delivering the overall vision for Curriculum for Excellence.

The vision for the new national qualifications is to create assessment opportunities that follow and support learning and teaching. This follows the principles laid out in *Building the Curriculum 5* and makes assessment a natural part of learning and teaching.

This route map aims to signpost all of the relevant material that is available to support your subject. Your professional judgement is vital and the documents listed below are intended to support you in deciding the most appropriate ways to generate evidence and assess candidates.

Education Scotland has produced a professional focus paper and this is a good starting point as it provides support to help develop learning and teaching approaches that take forward the purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence through National 4 Geography.

[http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/nq/g/nqresource\\_tcm4741305.asp](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/nq/g/nqresource_tcm4741305.asp)

## Geography National 4 course content

The main SQA geography page is found at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45627.html>. Pages specifically relating to National 4 are at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47441.html>. Staff should also regularly check the updates and announcements section of this page.

The course specification can be found at

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/CfE\\_CourseSpec\\_N4\\_SocialStudies\\_Geography.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseSpec_N4_SocialStudies_Geography.pdf).

There are four units: Physical Environments, Human Environments, Global Issues and the Added Value Unit.

Physical Environments key topics: location of landscape type, formation of key landscape features, land-use management and sustainability, weather. Landscapes from contexts within Scotland and/or the UK: either glaciated uplands and coastal landscapes **or** upland limestone and rivers and their valleys.

Human Environments key topics: contrasts in development, world population distribution and change, issues in changing urban and rural landscapes. Learners will study and compare developed and developing countries drawn from a global context.

Global Issues key topics: climate change, the impact of human activity on the natural environment, environmental hazards, trade and globalisation, tourism, health. Learners will study major global issues and the strategies adopted to manage these. **Two** topics must be studied for the course assessment.

Added Value Unit: an issue for personal study will be chosen from geographical contexts.



More detail on course coverage can be found in the course support notes.

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/CfE\\_CourseUnitSupportNotes\\_N4\\_SocialStudies\\_Geography.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N4_SocialStudies_Geography.pdf)

A course comparison from National 3 to National 5 is also available.

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/Geography\\_Course\\_comparison.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Geography_Course_comparison.pdf)

## Unit assessment

Units are mandatory when taken as part of the Geography National 4 course but they can be taken independently. Unit support notes follow on from the course support notes.

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/CfE\\_CourseUnitSupportNotes\\_N4\\_SocialStudies\\_Geography.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_CourseUnitSupportNotes_N4_SocialStudies_Geography.pdf)

Each individual unit also has a National 4 unit specification.

Each unit specification gives details of the outcomes and assessment standards. There are **two** outcomes per unit: one based on skills and one based on knowledge and understanding.

Physical Environments

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/CfE\\_Unit\\_N4\\_Geography\\_PhysicalEnvironments.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_N4_Geography_PhysicalEnvironments.pdf)

Human Environments

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/CfE\\_Unit\\_N4\\_Geography\\_HumanEnvironments.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_N4_Geography_HumanEnvironments.pdf)

Global Issues

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/CfE\\_Unit\\_N4\\_Geography\\_GlobalIssues.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_N4_Geography_GlobalIssues.pdf)

Learners must meet all the outcomes and assessment standards, and staff should read the documentation carefully. Evidence should be generated through learning and teaching. Assessment evidence can be drawn from a variety of activities and presented in a variety of formats. All of the evidence does not have to be generated from one activity but can be from several tasks and assessments carried out throughout the course. Learners should have access to resources to complete the assessment task and no time restrictions should be imposed. Staff should use their professional judgment when looking at the assessment evidence and ensure that minimum competency is met. They should undertake quality assurance regularly.

Three different ways of gathering evidence have been suggested by SQA. The most traditional approach is unit by unit. A combined approach links knowledge and understanding from two units together. Many staff will move towards the portfolio approach as their confidence grows. Here evidence is gathered from everyday learning using key classroom tasks. Unit assessment support is kept on the SQA Secure website.

## Added Value Assignment

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/CfE\\_Unit\\_N4\\_Geography\\_AddedValueUnit.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CfE_Unit_N4_Geography_AddedValueUnit.pdf)

The Added Value Unit will focus on challenge and application. There is one outcome broken down into six assessment standards. The Geography assignment will be set, marked and verified by schools. It will be conducted under some supervision and control. Learners will have an open choice of topic or issue to research and it can be something which they have not studied in class. Information should be collected from at least TWO sources which should include the use of fieldwork and/or maps. There will be flexibility in the type of presentation used, for

example a learning log or journal, a piece of writing, using digital media. There will be a greater emphasis on skills. The assessment has two stages: researching stage and preparing for the presentation of findings. This latter stage has been given a notional period of four hours. There are no restrictions on access to resources during either of the stages. The assessment should take place when the learners are ready, to avoid re-assessment. Further information on conducting the Added Value Unit assignment is available on the SQA Secure website. This includes a judging the evidence table and instructions for learners. During the first **two** years of implementation (2013/2014 and 2014/2015) all schools **must** use the SQA-published Added Value Unit assessments.

### Verification

The verification process is designed to be supportive and not onerous.

Internal verification is the process of ensuring standards are applied uniformly and consistently within a school in line with national standards. External verification is the process of ensuring that national standards are maintained consistently across all schools.

Quality Assurance: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58448.html>.

### Prior verification

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/files\\_ccc/Prior%20Verification%20Centre%20Guidance%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/Prior%20Verification%20Centre%20Guidance%20FINAL.pdf)

Staff who devise their own assessments can send them to SQA for prior verification, free of charge. This is only necessary where significant changes have been made to the unit assessment provided. It gives departments confidence that their proposed assessment is fit for purpose and meets national standards.

### Internal verification

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/InternalVerificationGuideforSQAcentres.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/InternalVerificationGuideforSQAcentres.pdf)

As a matter of course staff should be quality assuring their assessments by carrying out activities that they have always done, for example, double marking and blind marking. A sample of learners' work should be marked by more than one staff member in a department, and in single-person departments an arrangement should be made with another local authority school.

### External verification

In geography schools will submit a sample of learners' evidence for scrutiny by subject-specialist qualification verifiers. <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/66846.html>

SQA intend that every school will be verified over the first few years. Verification will take place in November, February and May. Twelve samples will be asked for.

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/Evidence\\_required\\_for\\_verificationevents.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Evidence_required_for_verificationevents.pdf)

Schools must retain the evidence until 31 July of each academic year.

[http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/SQA\\_Evidence\\_retention\\_requirements\\_A3\\_table.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQA_Evidence_retention_requirements_A3_table.pdf)

Key messages from verification will be put up on the SQA website.

## Education Scotland support materials

Advice and support for new national qualifications (Glow password required):

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/nqcoursematerials/subjects/geography/coursematerials.asp>

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/nqcoursematerials/subjects/geography/learningandteaching.asp>

## Other useful websites

A quick guide to finding vital information about Curriculum for Excellence can be found at:

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/keycfesupport/index.asp>

This appears under three headings

- the latest guidance, updates and plans for embedding CfE
- information on assessment
- information on the new qualifications.

The BBC have pulled together all their learning content in a new Knowledge and Learning Beta site that includes Class Clips:

[www.bbc.co.uk/education](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education)

The Bitesize websites have also been updated for National 4:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/subjects/zfrqxn>